

## Introduction

### U.S. Census Bureau's Mission

The U.S. Census Bureau mission is to be the preeminent collector and provider of timely, relevant, and quality data about the people and economy of the United States. We will succeed by:

- **valuing our employees;**
- **innovating in our work; and**
- **responding to our customers.**

The U.S. Census Bureau's long-standing purpose has been providing official statistics depicting the people and the economy of the United States. By implementing this Operational IT Plan, we will continue to improve our IT products and services for our customers and the American public in general.

Title 13, United States Code, regulates activities pertaining to the U.S. Census Bureau's statistical programs and ensures confidentiality of data. As the nation's fact-finder, the U.S. Census Bureau:

- conducts a Decennial Census to provide for the apportionment of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. Census counts are also used to draw Congressional and state-legislative district boundaries, for allocating federal and state funds under various grants-in-aid, for formulating public policy at all levels, and for private sector planning and decision-making;

- conducts numerous other censuses and surveys; collects and analyzes statistical data relating to the social and economic activities and characteristics of the population of the United States; disseminates these statistics to the Congress, the Executive branch, state and local governments, businesses, and the public;
- conducts special statistical studies on international trade, business services, industry, transportation, construction, and on federal, state, and local governments; issues reports, special tabulations, and monographs;
- conducts statistical research and development activities directed toward improving quality, lowering costs, and achieving more effective censuses and surveys;
- develops and maintains a geographically-referenced dictionary of all residential addresses in the United States for statistical use;
- develops and maintains a statistical directory of establishments engaged in economic activity in the United States; and
- preserves the confidentiality of this information.

**Strategy 9:** Support implementation of re-engineered business processes.

**Strategy 10:** Use technology to deploy a “Digital” U.S. Census Bureau and reduce respondent burden.

**Goal 4:** Enhance the IT skills of our employees.

**Strategy 11:** Develop IT personnel re-sources to support the current and future technology needs of the U.S. Census Bureau.

The 2000 Operational IT Plan update was developed in coordination with the U.S. Census Bureau program areas, and includes IT program support and initiatives for:

- IT Directorate;
- Decennial;
- Geography;
- Data Access and Dissemination System (DADS);
- Demographic Programs;
- Economic Programs;
- Field Operations;
- Finance and Administration; and
- Methodology and Standards.

The “Bureau-written” Operational IT Plan draft was briefed to our IT Council and to our IT Review Board for examination and comment. When those reviews were completed, the Plan and our 2001 budget submission went to our Executive Staff for final approval before submitting both to the Department of Commerce. This IT Plan development process links to our Business Plans, our Strategic IT Plan, and our 2001 budget initiatives. Most importantly, this process invites participation across the U.S. Census Bureau to ensure its acceptance, implementation, and linkage to our budget submission.

Our process for ranking and stacking U.S. Census Bureau new initiatives was integrated this year with our overall budget submission process. This was a very important step towards gathering and analyzing our baseline, with any ongoing initiatives, and with any new initiatives for FY 2001. What this integrated process has shown us is that we need to develop Business Case Analyses for the various components of the U.S. Census Bureau’s infrastructure (i.e., Local Area Networks, PC support, Help Desks, etc.). These Business Case Analyses will tell us if there is a more efficient and cost effective way of doing our baseline business and, over the next couple of years, allow us to start looking at economies of scale for people and equipment. That, in turn, could provide us with the data, analysis, and results to allow us to reprogram baseline funding to new initiatives.

This year’s integrated planning and budgeting processes resulted in a single new IT initiative: Census Modernization. This initiative begins the end-to-end modernization of the technology that supports our censuses and surveys; we describe this initiative in detail in Appendix A.

Our IT Projects are evaluated in three phases:

### **Phase I: Selection**

- considers the investment portfolio (new, operational, and systems under development);
- evaluates IT project proposals, analyzing risks, benefits, and costs;
- prioritizes new projects based on program priorities, risks, and returns;
- makes investment decisions and establishes the review cycle; and
- reviews progress and performance of current development projects and operational systems as well as new projects.

### **Phase II: Control**

- identifies problems, monitors projects/systems against benefits delivered, established costs, scheduled milestones, and performance measures; and
- identifies alternatives to correct deficiencies and takes appropriate action.

### **Phase III: Evaluation**

- conducts post-implementation reviews of all major systems that focus on identifying the cause of discrepancies between anticipated vs. actual results in terms of cost, schedule, performance, and delivered benefits to mission improvement;
- makes recommendations to continue, adjust, or consider alternatives to the operational system; and
- uses lessons learned as a result of post-implementation reviews to improve the existing investment selection and control processes.

Documentation prepared during these three phases represents the principal documentation for IT Review Board consideration. U.S. Census Bureau staff may be called upon as necessary to provide additional data and analysis.

Members meet on a schedule that complements the planning and budgeting formulation processes, with additional sessions called as required.

The IT Review Board determines the processes to be used for IT capital planning and investment, the content and format of information to be presented, and other items related to the functions of this Board, including its relationship to other groups and processes used by the U.S. Census Bureau.

### **Processes**

The processes, procedures, and reporting requirements used by the IT Review Board are redefined as appropriate to meet the current planning and fiscal environments. For the selection phase, program managers will be required to provide information enabling the Board to make investment decisions based on the value to the U.S. Census Bureau, as determined by comparisons and tradeoffs among competing project proposals. Such information includes responses to decision-making criteria that examine expected risk-adjusted returns on investment, technical risks, improvements to program effectiveness, performance measures, effects on customers, and additional considerations required by the Raines' Rules.\*

The IT Review Board considers systems and other investments as a portfolio for a given program area. A Technical Review Board, comprised of a variety of analysts familiar with and representing the budget, procurement, contract administration, technical architecture, system development, security,

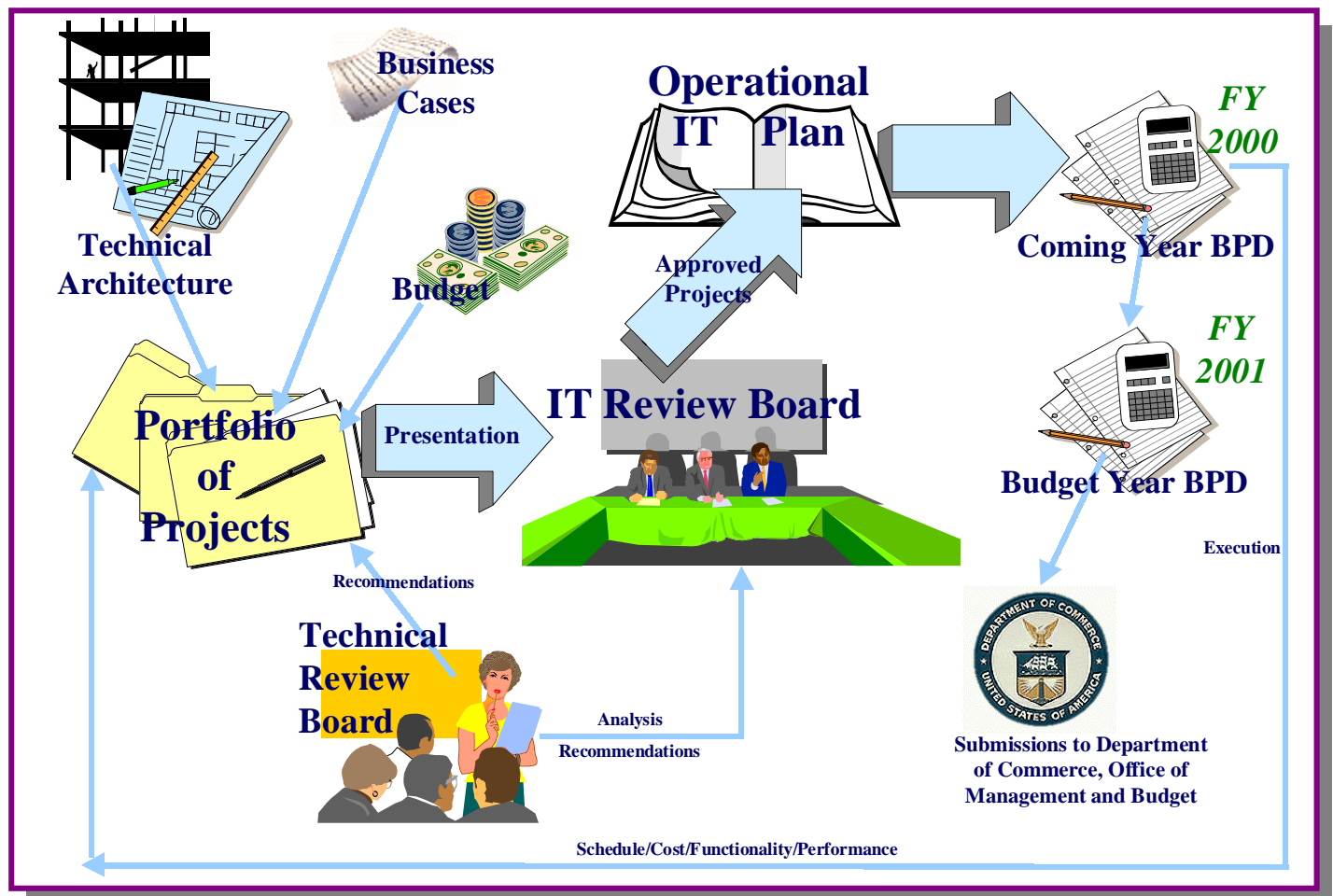
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\* Investments in major information systems proposed for funding in the President's budget must comply with the requirements of OMB Memorandum 97-02, also known as the "Raines' Rules."

**To summarize the IT Review Board Process:**

- the U.S. Census Bureau has a portfolio of projects under consideration;
- the Technical Review Board analyzes these projects and reports to the IT Review Board;
- the IT Review Board submits approved projects for inclusion in the Operational IT Plan; and
- approved projects are continually monitored to ensure they comply with budget and legislative guidelines.

This is depicted in Figure 1, below:



**Figure 1: The IT Review Board Process**

## Supporting a “Digital” Department of Commerce

Across the U.S. Census Bureau, we are quickly moving from paper to “digital” technology, providing customers with more choices for data access, and improving public trust in data protection and communications. The U.S. Census Bureau is positioned to demonstrate how the Department of Commerce has made tremendous strides as a recognized leader in technology. We are committed to making the entire Bureau a model of electronic commerce, and we strongly support the E-Commerce Department of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century!

Recognizing that government information is a vital national commodity, our dissemination policy is to provide Internet access to demographic, social, economic, and housing data while protecting the confidentiality of individual responses. We freely disseminate our information and encourage other organizations, both public and private, to make this information available to the general public and to specific customer markets.

The Internet is our principal means of disseminating data and data products. To encourage broad access to our information and to meet a wide range of user needs, we provide various levels of subject and geographic detail in varying formats and media, such as CD-ROM. Users have the

option of purchasing data in other media, or of purchasing customized products and services.

In addition to the data dissemination function, we are making broad use of data in digital form through our computer-assisted interviewing, collection of data via the Internet, and other means. Our strategy includes:

- re-engineering our work processes;
- converting paper processes to electronic;
- increasing public access to U.S. Census Bureau information; and
- reducing public reporting burdens to the U.S. Census Bureau with our census surveys.

We will play a leadership role as the Department of Commerce defines and implements its “Digital” Department activities.

Related to providing full access to U.S. Census Bureau data is the responsibility to provide accessibility to disabled individuals. We already provide some tools needed to enable our disabled employees to gain systems access. We will ensure that new systems fully comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act for public access.

## Burden Reduction Efforts and Goals

Achieving the burden reduction goals set forth in the Paperwork Reduction Act is a major challenge for the U.S. Census Bureau. We generally experience increased reporting burdens during two primary periodic collections: the constitutionally-mandated

Decennial Census of Population and Housing, and the quinquennial Economic Census. We will, however, continue to work diligently to reduce the burden of its periodic and non-periodic collections.